

NOBLE BLOOD.

A STORY.

BY JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

XVI.

Ambrose awoke toward noon, with a vague impression of assassinations and imprisonments in the "Pompeii" on his mind; and after a luncheon-breakfast, he determined to take a turn in the open air, the better to consolidate his thoughts. Descending to the wharves, he got aboard the old ferry-boat, memorable as having been the scene of his first encounter with Jim, and set forth across the peninsula to the ocean-cove on the further side. As he crossed the summit of the road that brought him w thin view of the deserted hamlet, he was startled to see Miss Cadogna swiftly descending the road toward him.

She was within fifty yards when he first caught sight of her, but she was walking with her eyes down, and did not see him until she was almost upon him. She uttered a sharp exclamation, and a subtlety of movement about the mouth and eyes that showed refinement and high breeding. There was a new impressiveness of power and impetuosity about her. Ambrose looked at her attentively. Perhaps the discoveries he had made overcame so far as her ancestry had the effect of drawing her with a fresh interest.

"Did you come on purpose?" she demanded, eyeing him penetratively in her turn. "Did you know I was here?"

"I did not," he replied.

"I'm in haste," she added after a moment, and made as if to go on; but again checked herself and said, "I've seen him!"

Ambrose could not doubt whom she referred to. "I hope you were amused," he remarked.

"Mr. Ardentini came this morning," she went on, glancing past him in a preoccupied way.

"Have you seen him also?"

"Do you think it would be best?" she asked quickly.

"It might be worth trying," answered he, with a smile.

"You wish to thwart me?" she exclaimed angrily; "but I'll have my own way!"

Ambrose bowed. "Entirely, so far as I'm concerned."

She turned to him and put her hand on his arm, scrutinizing his face. "Would you help me, then?" asked she.

Decidedly, this was the most ungraceful mood she had worn yet. Ambrose was almost disgusted.

"What would you like to have me do?" he said.

"If they meet, all will be lost. That fool hasn't the strength of an infant. The mere thought of his uncle turns him white. All I can do is to keep them apart. I told him not to leave his vessel—

"Do you think I'd be marrying him round a corner like that? He shall marry me before all the world, or not at all!"

Ambrose still laughed. "Well, it's a question between you and the uncle," he said. "As for me, unless I shoot the uncle, or marry Miss O'Mutan, I don't see how I can help you. You must see Mr. Ardentini, and talk with him."

Miss Cadogna stood with her eyes cast down, biting her lips. "I don't trust you!" she said at length, looking up.

"You don't trust yourself!" returned Ambrose.

He dark brows drew together, but she made no reply. After a moment she resumed her walk onward, without another word.

"This is a d—d queer business," muttered Ambrose to himself, between his teeth.

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Miss Cadogna with a headache!" exclaimed Ambrose in surprise.

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